

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
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R 181645Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7556
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 6934

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

GENEVA FOR AMBASSADOR TOON

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, CH, UR
SUBJ: SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS: SOVIET OFFICIAL ON RENEWED POLEMICS

REF: MOSCOW 6714

SUMMARY: AN AUTHORITATIVE SOVIET MFA SINOLOGIST SAYS THAT THE
"ALEKSANDROV" ARTICLE OF MAY 14 (REFTEL) SHOWED THE END OF SOVIET
PATIENCE WITH PEKING'S CONTINUING ANTI-SOVIET POSTURE.
THIS ARTICLE'S INTENSITY AND AUTHORITY WERE IN SPECIFIC
RESPONSE TO RECENT REMARKS BY HUA KUO-FENG AND YEH CHIEN-
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YING, HE SAID, AND IT WAS A "COLLECTIVE" EFFORT. HE FELT
THAT PEKING'S "POWER STRUGGLE" WAS CONTINUING AND PERHAPS
INTENSIFYING, ESPECIALLY ON THE QUESTION OF TENG HSIAO-PING'S
REHABILITATION. END SUMMARY.

1. IGOR ROGACHEV, CHIEF OF THE ASIA SECTION OF THE
SOVIET MFAS POLICY PLANNING ADMINISTRATION, TOLD

EMBOFF ON MAY 17 THAT THE PRAVDA ARTICLE (MAY 14), OVER THE AUTHORITATIVE BY-LINE "I. ALEKSANDROV," SHOWED THAT THE SOVIETS HAD LOST PATIENCE WITH THE CONTINUING ANTI-SOVIET RHETORIC FROM PEKING. IN PARTICULAR, HE CITED RECENT STATEMENTS BY CHAIRMAN/PREMIER HUA KUO-FENG AND VICE CHAIRMAN YEH CHIEN-YING, AND SAID, "WE FELT WE HAD TO ANSWER." HE SAID THAT THE SOVIETS HAD PAID CLOSE ATTENTION TO LEADERSHIP STATEMENTS SINCE MAO'S DEATH, AND THAT HUA AND YEH HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY MADE SUCH DIRECT ATTACKS. OTHERS HAD, OF COURSE, INCLUDING DEPUTY PREMIER LI HSIEN-NIEN, BUT NOW IT WAS CLEAR THAT THIS WAS THE UNIFORM POSITION OF THE ENTIRE PRC LEADERSHIP.

2. TO THE QUESTION OF WHY THE ARTICLE CONTAINED NO REFERENCE TO MOSCOW'S ALLEGED WILLINGNESS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS (AS THE MOST RECENT TWO "ALEKSANDROV" ARTICLES HAD), ROGACHEV SAID THAT THIS SOVIET WILLINGNESS WAS WELL-KNOWN TO THE CHINESE AND OTHERS AND THIS ARTICLE DID NOT CHANGE IT. THE PROBLEM, HE SAID, WAS THAT THE CHINESE HAD NOT RESPONDED IN KIND AND HAD ACTUALLY STEPPED UP ANTI-SOVIET PROPAGANDA SINCE MAO'S DEATH. OF COURSE, HE CONTINUED, CHINESE RHETORIC AND CHINESE ACTIONS DID NOT ALWAYS COINCIDE, "AS YOU AMERICANS WELL KNOW," AND THE SOVIETS WERE NOT WRITING OFF THE CHANCES OF SOME IMPROVEMENT "IN THE FUTURE." HE WOULD NOT GIVE AN ESTIMATE ON HOW FAR INTO THE FUTURE THE SOVIETS WERE LOOKING, BUT SAID THAT THE VERY INTENSITY OF

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ANTI-SOVIET COMMENT STRONGLY IMPLIES THAT THERE ARE VOICES IN PEKING ARGUING FOR MODERATION. "OTHERWISE, WHY IS IT NECESSARY TO KEEP UP THIS COMMENTARY, AND TO SMOTHER SUPPOSED PRO-SOVIET VOICES?"

3. THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP IS SHARPLY DIVIDED, SAID ROGACHEV, AND POLICY TOWARD THE SOVIET UNION MAY BE ONE OF THE ISSUES. THIS IS RELATED TO THE QUESTION OF THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY, AND THE SOVIETS HAD NOTED SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN YEH'S SPEECH AT THE TACHING CONFERENCE ON INDUSTRIALIZATION AND THE PEOPLE'S DAILY (PD) ARTICLE ON MILITARY MODERNIZATION (HONG KONG 5571). FOR EXAMPLE, SAID ROGACHEV, PD'S CRITICISM OF THOSE WHO "WORSHIP" NUCLEAR WEAPONS MAY HAVE BEEN AIMED AT YEH AND OTHER WHO SEEK TO MODERNIZE THE MILITARY THROUGH INCREASING THE BUDGET AT THE EXPENSE OF THE CIVILIAN ECONOMY, ESPECIALLY AGRICULTURE. THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY IS CLEARLY ONE OF THE KEY QUESTIONS AT ISSUE IN THE NEW LEADERSHIP.

4. THE OTHER KEY ISSUE, SAID ROGACHEV, WHICH AFFECTS THE DISCUSSION OF MOST OTHER SUBJECTS, IS WHAT TO DO ABOUT TENG HSIAO-PING. SOME PEOPLE WANT HIM FULLY REHABILITATED, AND OTHERS DO NOT, AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT. "IF HUA HAD HIS WAY," SAID ROGACHEV, "TENG WOULD SIMPLY DISAPPEAR." THE SOVIETS HAVE HEARD OF THE FORMATION OF TWO FACTIONS ON THE TENG MATTER, ONE CALLED THE "SOUTHERN PRO-TENG GROUP (YUN TENG NAN P'AI)" AND THE OTHER THE "NORTHERN ANTI-TENG GROUP (PI TENG PEI P'AI)". IT APPEARS, SAID ROGACHEV, THAT THE QUESTION IS THE NUMBER ONE PROBLEM FOR THE HUA REGIME, AND HOWEVER IT IS RESOLVED IT WILL CAUSE WIDE REPERCUSSIONS. THE HUA REGIME IS CLEARLY "TRANSITIONAL", ROGACHEV SAID.

5. THE SOVIET GESTURES AFTER MAO'S DEATH, INCLUDING
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THE PARTY MESSAGES, THE LONG RESTRAINT IN PROPAGANDA ATTACKS, AND THE RESUMPTION OF THE BORDER TALKS, WERE AIMED AT "CHINESE PUBLIC OPINION," SAID ROGACHEV. "DESPITE WHAT THEY ARE TOLD, MANY CHINESE PEOPLE KNOW THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAS NO HARMFUL INTENTION TOWARD THEM." THE "ALEKSANDROV" ARTICLE IS AN ANSWER TO THE LEADERS WHO DISTORT SOVIET VIEWS IN AN EFFORT TO MISLEAD THE PEOPLE, HE SAID.

6. ON THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE ARTICLE, ROGACHEV SAID THAT IT WAS "COLLECTIVELY" WRITTEN, BUT HE WOULD NOT SAY SPECIFICALLY WHO HAD BEEN INVOLVED. HE LIKewise WOULD NOT SAY WHO WROTE THE "GALIN" ARTICLE IN NEW TIMES (REFTEL, PARA 2), BUT SAID THAT "WE HAVE MANY CHINA-HANDS, AS YOU DO."

7. COMMENT: ROGACHEV WAS AT SOME PAINS TO INDICATE THAT THE "ALEKSANDROV" ARTICLE WAS A SOVIET REACTION TO PEKING'S CONTINUED AND HEIGHTENED ANTI-SOVIETISM, BUT HE DID NOT ARGUE WITH THE OBSERVATION THAT SOVIET POLEMICS HAVE NOW RETURNED TO THE LEVEL WHICH PREVAILED BEFORE MAO'S DEATH. HE ALSO LINKED PEKING'S CONSISTENCY IN FOREIGN POLICY, INCLUDING ITS ANTI-SOVIET LINE, WITH THE CONTINUING INTERNAL "POWER STRUGGLE," BUT DID NOT ATTEMPT TO EXPLAIN THE INCONSISTENCY BETWEEN MOSCOW'S DECISION TO DENOUNCE THE TOP LEADERSHIP FOR ITS SUPPOSED UNITY OF ANTI-SOVIET VIEWS, AND ITS CONVICTION THAT THE PRC LEADERSHIP IS SHARPLY DIVIDED ON SEVERAL ISSUES, POSSIBLY INCLUDING RELATIONS WITH THE USSR. HOWEVER, HE IMPLICITLY LINKED MOSCOW'S EARLIER HOPES FOR IMPROVMENT AFTER MAO'S DEATH WITH ITS HOPES THAT THE HUA REGIME WILL INDEED BE TRANSITIONAL. HIS REFERENCE TO "CHINESE PUBLIC OPINION" AS A TARGET FOR SOVIET PROPAGANDA WAS DISINGENUOUS

AT BEST, AND HE WAS AT A LOSS TO EXPLAIN THE INTENSITY OF THE "ALEKSAN
DROV" ARTICLE AS BEING CONSISTENT WITH THIS TARGET
AUDIENCE.
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Message Attributes

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